U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Kremmling Field Office
P.O. Box 68
Kremmling, CO 80459

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NUMBER: CO-120-2007-07-EA

PROJECT NAME: Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) Reroute

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T. 2N., R. 81 W., Section 2: Lots 13 & 14 and Section 11: NW¼NE¼

APPLICANT: Western Area Power Administration (WAPA)

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

Background: Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) was originally issued a right-of-way (ROW) in 1954 for the 69kV transmission line from Gore Pass to Muddy Pass. A reservation (an agency right-of-way) was issued February 5, 1999 to amend the original right-of-way (ROW) by increasing the width from 75 feet to 100 feet, adding access roads, and converting the reservation to a Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) authorization. Effective June 21, 2005, rights-of-way, instead of reservations, are issued to federal agencies. Therefore, BLM cannot amend the current reservation for the re-route proposed in the current application. A FLPMA ROW would be the authorizing document.

Proposed Action: WAPA proposes to re-align a portion of its Gore Tap-Muddy Pass 69 kV transmission line to skirt the confluence of Red Dirt Creek and Wolford Reservoir. WAPA would abandon a .6 mile segment of the line and construct 1.0 miles of new line. The width of the transmission line ROW is 100 feet and the road access width is 30 feet.

In order to incorporate current design standards, the new line would use two overhead ground wires. The line would utilize several three-pole angle structures, in addition to a small number of two-pole tangent structures. Each three pole structure employs multiple guy wires that extend from the upper sections of the poles. The average span between structures is 500 feet. To avoid a cultural site, eight poles would have to be re-aligned, five of which are on public land.

Staging areas for this project would be within the existing ROW. Approximately .3 miles of new access roads would need to be constructed (see map below). The new access road would be designated and signed by the BLM as 'administrative' and would authorize motorized access to WAPA for maintenance purposes. Repair of existing access roads would be minimal to the extent that would allow safe passage of the required construction equipment which could include pickup trucks, tractor and pole trailer, an auger truck, dozer and/or grader, small crane and/or a bucket truck. Stipulations from the old right-of-way state that structures would be removed or cutoff just below the ground surface and the materials would be removed from the ROW. See Attachment #1 for standard ROW stipulations.

Design features of Proposed Action:

- The BLM would inspect disturbed areas for noxious weeds for three growing seasons after the project is completed. If invasive, non-native species do become established, it would be the responsibility of WAPA to control the weeds. . Following the 3 year intensive monitoring, the project area would require periodic monitoring to ensure any weeds are controlled and/or eradicated.

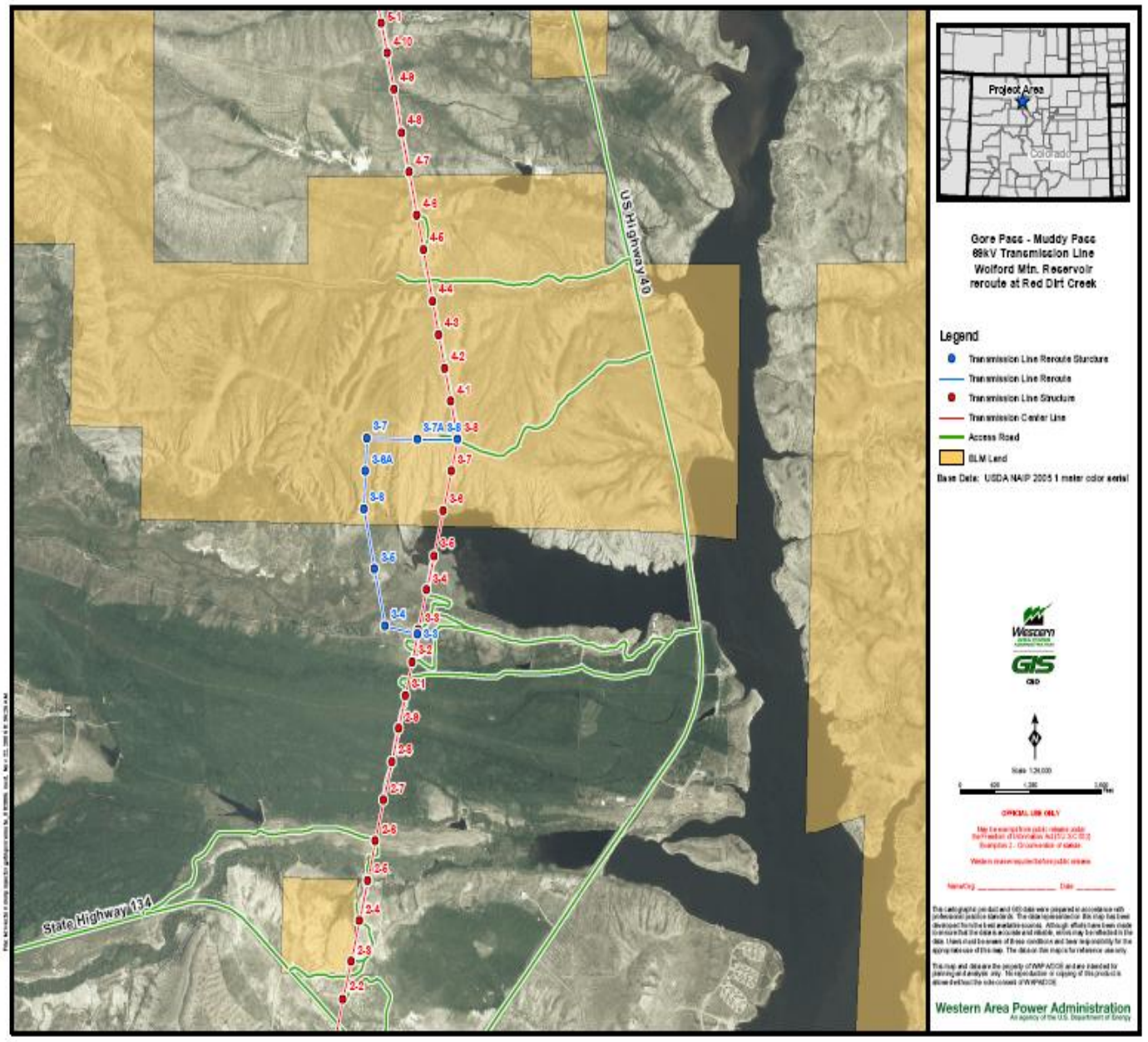
- The proposed new poles and cross arms would be constructed to specifications which would assure large birds such as eagles could not be electrocuted (refer to "Suggested Practices for Avian Protection on Powerlines," prepared by the Avian Power Line Interaction Committee, 2006). All poles and cross arms would be fitted with devices that prevent perching and electrocution. In addition, line markers would be used for both the ground wires and guy wires to prevent collisions.

- Surface disturbances would be stabilized and seeded, and any portion of the old access route that is no longer needed would be reclaimed.

- If the new proposed access road is left open for maintenance or repair work, then erosion control must be maintained for the duration of the ROW. In addition, use of the access road would be limited to periods of dry soil conditions or the road would need to be constructed as an all-weather road. If emergency access does occur during wet soil conditions, then the applicant would need to do any necessary repairs to reduce erosion as soon as soil conditions would allow.

- If the disturbance associated with the proposed access road is over 1 acre, the applicant would be responsible for obtaining a stormwater permit or waiver as required under the Clean Water Act and administered by the state of Colorado.

Project Map:


Project Area
Colorado
Gore Pass - Muddy Pass
69kV Transmission Line
Wolford Mtn. Reservoir
reroute at Red Dirt Creek
Legend
Transmission Line Reroute Structure
Transmission Line Reroute
Transmission Line Structure
Transmission Center Line
Access Road
BLM Land
Base Data: USDA NAIP 2005 1 meter color aerial
US Highway 40
State Highway 134
Western
GIS
Western Area Power Administration

No Action Alternative: The No Action Alternative would be to deny WAPA the reroute for their transmission line. The ice damage and flooding of the existing poles would continue and power would be compromised.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE ACTION: The purpose of this environmental assessment is to analyze the re-route portion of the existing transmission line. However, the right-of-way grant would encompass all the land the reservation currently authorizes along with the new re-route location.

There is a need to consider the ROW application because the line directly serves the Muddy Pass Substation and further serves Walden Substation. There has also been concern about possible ice-damage to the two structures in the reservoir, which prompted Western's Rural Utility customer, Mountain Parks Electric, Inc., to request a solution to the problem.

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW: The Proposed Action is subject to and has been reviewed for conformance with the following plan (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3):

Name of Plan: Kremmling Resource Management Plan (RMP), Record of Decision (ROD)

Date Approved: December 19, 1984; Updated February 1999

Decision Number/Page: II-B-12 pg.14

Decision Language: Provide the opportunity to utilize public lands for development of facilities which benefit the public, while considering environmental and agency concerns.

Standards for Public Land Health: In January 1997, Colorado Bureau of Land Management (BLM) approved the Standards for Public Land Health. Standards describe conditions needed to sustain public land health and relate to all uses of the public lands. The following are the approved standards:

Standard	Definition/Statement
#1 Upland Soils	Upland soils exhibit infiltration and permeability rates that are appropriate to soil type, climate, land form, and geologic processes. Adequate soil infiltration and permeability allows for the accumulation of soil moisture necessary for optimal plant growth and vigor, and minimizes surface runoff.
#2 Riparian Systems	Riparian systems associated with both running and standing water, function properly and have the ability to recover from major surface disturbances such as fire, severe grazing, or 100-year floods. Riparian vegetation captures sediment, and provides forage, habitat and bio-diversity. Water quality is improved or maintained. Stable soils store and release water slowly.
#3 Plant and Animal Communities	Healthy, productive plant and animal communities of native and other desirable species are maintained at viable population levels commensurate with the species and habitat's potential. Plants and animals at both the community and population level are productive, resilient, diverse, vigorous, and able to reproduce and sustain natural fluctuations, and ecological processes.
#4 Threatened and Endangered Species	Special status, threatened and endangered species (federal and state), and other plants and animals officially designated by the BLM, and their habitats are maintained or enhanced by sustaining healthy, native plant and animal communities.
#5 Water Quality	The water quality of all water bodies, including ground water where applicable, located on or

	influenced by BLM lands will achieve or exceed the Water Quality Standards established by the State of Colorado. Water Quality Standards for surface and ground waters include the designated beneficial uses, numeric criteria, narrative criteria, and anti-degradation requirements set forth under State law as found in (5 CCR 1002-8), as required by Section 303(c) of the Clean Water Act.

Because a standard exists for these five categories, a finding must be made for each of them in the environmental analysis. These findings are located in specific elements below or in the Interdisciplinary Team Analysis Review Record and Checklist (IDT-RRC) (Appendix 1).

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT / ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES / MITIGATION MEASURES:

CRITICAL ELEMENTS: The following critical elements: Air Quality, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Environmental Justice, Farmlands/Prime and Unique, Native American Religious Concerns, Wastes, Hazardous or Solid, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and Wilderness were evaluated and determined that they were not present or that there would be no impact to them from the Proposed Action or No Action Alternative. See IDT-RRC in Appendix 1 for further information.

The following critical elements were determined to be potentially impacted and were carried forward for analysis from the IDT-RRC in Appendix 1.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: A Class III pedestrian cultural resources inventory was completed by WAPA for this proposed project. One previously recorded prehistoric site (5GA3551), one previously unrecorded prehistoric site (5GA3709), a segment of a previously unrecorded historic ditch (5GA3735.1), and two previously unrecorded prehistoric isolated finds (5GA3710 and 5GA3711) were located during inventory

Environmental Consequences: Cultural site 5GA3551 is located within the Area of Potential Effect (APE) at pole location 3-8. Cultural site 5GA3709 is located within the APE at pole location 3-5. The historic irrigation ditch segment is within the APE, is evaluated as needing additional data to determine eligibility to National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) but would be avoided during construction. The two isolated finds, 5GA3710 and 5GA3711, are by definition ineligible to the NRHP and require no further work. Sites 5GA3551 and 5GA3709 were test excavated and found to contain intact subsurface cultural deposits and are recommended eligible to the NRHP.

Mitigation: To avoid impacts to 5GA3551 and 5GA3709, the following mitigation would be required:

- WAPA would have a qualified and BLM permitted archaeologist on-site during pole augering to help the construction crew avoid surface features, and to observe and document the excavated soil sediments for cultural materials.
- WAPA, or its contractors, would only use rubber –tired vehicles during construction.
- A post-construction monitoring report would be prepared by WAPA and submitted to BLM and State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

FLOODPLAINS

Affected Environment: The existing ROW and the Proposed Action cross the floodplain of Red Dirt Creek, with the existing line crossing a portion that is inundated by Wolford Reservoir. The Proposed Action would relocate the line upstream of the present line and primarily cross the floodplain reducing the length of the line affected by the reservoir.

Environmental Consequences: The Proposed Action's planned pole locations for spanning the creek are outside of the floodplain (north side) and on the outer edge (south side). The poles would not affect the creek's ability to utilize the floodplain nor would it increase the flood hazard. Thus, the Proposed Action would not impact the floodplain. The No Action alternative would keep the existing poles within the floodplain.

INVASIVE, NON-NATIVE SPECIES

Affected Environment: The Proposed Action would occur in an area with a mountain shale range site that is relatively undisturbed, with few, if any, invasive, non-native species. The disturbances associated with the Proposed Action would provide an avenue for the establishment of invasive, non-native species within the project area.

Environmental Consequences: The proposed transmission line reroute would create small areas of disturbance where the 5 new poles would be installed on BLM-administered public lands. In addition, 0.3 miles of new access road would be required to complete the proposed project. The new road and other disturbances would create an avenue for invasive, non-native species to follow and infest areas that were previously free from invasive, non-native species. The abandoned 0.6 mile segment of the transmission line would also be an area susceptible to weed invasion and spread. However, once native vegetation reestablishes along this route, the chance of weed invasion or spread would decrease substantially. WAPA would be responsible for control of any and all invasive, non-native species that become established or spread caused by the Proposed Action. Since the new access road would be used to maintain the transmission line in the future, periodic monitoring for invasive, non-native species along the road would be required for as long as the transmission line is functional. Following the 3 year intensive monitoring, the project area would require periodic monitoring to ensure any weeds are controlled and/or eradicated.

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Affected Environment: The project would be constructed primarily in sagebrush steppe habitat which supports a variety of migratory bird species. Some of the more common species include Brewer's sparrows, sage sparrows, common nighthawks, green-tailed towhees, sage thrashers, mountain bluebirds, golden eagles, bald eagles, and red-tail hawks. The existing transmission lines and wooden poles provide perches for bird species inhabiting the project area.

Environmental Consequences: The project could be hazardous to migratory birds since the powerlines would be obstacles to birds in flight causing injury and mortality if collisions occur. Mortality or injury occurrence as a result of the Proposed Action may initially increase until the birds become accustomed to the new location of the line. Large birds, such as eagles, could be electrocuted if wire spacing is not adequate to avoid contact with their wings. The No Action Alternative would not change existing habitat conditions for migratory birds in the project area since the existing line would remain intact. The design features of the Proposed Action include best management practices to mitigate impacts to birds.

THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE SPECIES (includes a finding on Standard 4)

Affected Environment: A list of threatened, endangered, and candidate species which could inhabit the proposed project area was received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on September 18, 2007. Analysis of this list indicated no listed or candidate species would be impacted by the proposed project.

A population of *Astragalus osterhoutii*, an endangered plant species, is located about 1.1 miles south of the proposed project area. Since the project is located in an area with suitable soils for this species, surveys were conducted in October 2006 (after the flowering period) and June 2007 (during the flowering period). No plants were observed on either date.

Greater sage-grouse, a BLM designated Sensitive Species, have been observed in and adjacent to the proposed project area. The closest strutting ground or lek is located 2.1 miles to the east with another 2.5 miles to the west. Since research has determined that approximately 80% of sage-grouse nest within 4 miles of a lek, it is likely that sage-grouse are nesting in and adjacent to the project area.

Environmental Consequences: The Proposed Action would provide perching habitat for golden eagles, which prey on sage-grouse. Male sage-grouse are especially vulnerable to eagle predation during the breeding season when they display on strutting grounds or leks. However, since the lek sites are more than 2 miles from the powerline, predation on the leks by eagles perching on the line would not likely occur. In addition to perching sites for eagles, power distribution lines can be obstacles to sage-grouse in flight with injury or death resulting from collisions with lines or poles. Sage-grouse mortality or injury occurrence as a result of the Proposed Action may initially increase until the birds become accustomed to the new location of the line. The No Action Alternative would not change existing habitat conditions for Greater Sage-grouse in the project area since the existing line would remain intact.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for Threatened & Endangered species: Neither the Proposed Action or No Action Alternative would affect Standard 4.

WATER QUALITY, SURFACE AND GROUND (includes a finding on Standard 5)

Affected Environment: The existing line and proposed line are located within the Muddy Creek 5th Order Watershed, which is in the Upper Colorado River Basin. The existing access road on public lands would be tributary to Muddy Creek (Wolford Reservoir) and its tributary Red Dirt Creek. The proposed line and access road would be tributary to Red Dirt Creek. Prior to the reservoir's construction, the BLM conducted water quality monitoring on Red Dirt Creek. Current monitoring of the area is done on Deer Creek, a tributary creek upstream of the powerline.

Designated uses for Red Dirt Creek and this segment of Muddy Creek are: Aquatic Life Coldwater class 1, Recreation class 1a, water supply, and agriculture. The reservoir, Muddy Creek, and its tributaries are all listed in the state's 2006 Monitoring and Evaluation List for possible water quality impairment. Surface waters included on the list are suspected of water quality impairment due to the existing information, but additional data is needed to determine if an impairment does exist, to what degree, and for what uses. The Wolford Reservoir is

listed for possible impairment due to dissolved oxygen contents. Muddy Creek and its tributaries are listed due to water temperatures. Dissolved oxygen concentrations are inversely related to water temperature, so the two possible impairments could be related. In the past, Muddy Creek and its tributaries have also been identified for possible sediment concerns. BLM sampling efforts indicate that Red Dirt Creek has higher total dissolved solids and electrical conductivities than most of the public Middle Park stream segments. The stream tended to have higher dissolved sulfate and selenium concentrations, apparently due to the geology and perhaps the private irrigation practices, which occasionally exceed the state's standards for some uses.

Environmental Consequences: The relocation of the line would result in surface disturbances within staging areas and for the new access route. Due to the sparseness of upland vegetation, the soils, and slopes, surface disturbances on public lands could result in sediment laden runoff reaching Red Dirt Creek/Wolford Reservoir. Best management practices to reduce and control erosion are included as design features of the Proposed Action and would be necessary from the construction stage through the reclamation stage until seeded areas are at least as established as undisturbed sites.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for water quality: The Proposed Action occurs within an allotment that has been assessed for Land Health Standards in 2001. The area was considered to not be meeting Standard #5, in part due to the soils, irrigation waters, and other identified factors. With mitigation, the Proposed Action's small amount of disturbance would not affect the area's ability to meet the Standard.

WETLANDS & RIPARIAN ZONES (includes a finding on Standard 2)

Affected Environment: BLM completed riparian inventories on Red Dirt Creek in 1979 and 1991. Proper Functioning Condition Assessments, riparian utilization cages, and photographs were used to document riparian conditions from 1990-1993, prior to the flooding of most of the public stream segment. Red Dirt Creek's stream channel was very sinuous with an active floodplain prior to being inundated by the reservoir. However, livestock and big game were over-grazing the riparian vegetation causing a reduction in the woody component and encouraging invader and increaser species.

The remaining riparian area on BLM-administered public lands supports willow, wild rose, shrubby cinquefoil, sedges, and rushes. Forbs include pea vine, wild iris, and Canadian thistle. Currently, a ridgeline fence keeps permitted livestock from accessing the bottom from the north. The BLM is working with the other landowner to prevent their livestock from grazing the public riparian areas and continued monitoring has been recommended. During the summer of 2006, BLM observed a bloom covering much of the reservoir's water surface in the "Red Dirt Creek Bay" west of Highway 40. An aquatic plant expert was consulted and the aquatic plant was a variety of Smartweed (i.e. native buckwheat that can grow in shallow water and/or mud flats.)

Environmental Consequences: The Proposed Action would occur in an upland area adjacent to the riparian area and would cross the riparian area on private land. Since there would be no vehicle traffic or actions on BLM-administered public lands within the riparian area, there would be no impacts.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for riparian systems: The Proposed Action would not impact federally owned riparian or wetland areas. The BLM's portion was rated in

2001 as not meeting the Standard. If the applicant does not disturb the BLM's riparian area, the Proposed Action would not affect the area's ability to meet or move towards meeting the standard.

NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS: The following non-critical elements were determined to be potentially impacted and were carried forward for analysis from the IDT-RRC in Appendix 1.

SOILS (includes a finding on Standard 1)

Affected Environment: The existing access road crosses clay loam soils that are all classified as Mountain Shale range sites. The longest portion of the road is mapped as Aaberg clay loam, 6-15% slopes. The clay loam layer is only 4 inches in depth, underlain by clay. Shale is generally within 2 feet from the surface. Permeability is slow and the plant available moisture is low. Surface runoff is rapid and although the water erosion hazard is only moderate, the soil has a low tolerance for soil loss without affecting overall soil fertility. The soil has moderate to severe limitations for a road due to its clay content, high shrink/swell properties, and low strength. The proposed access route is mapped as crossing Cryorthents-Rock Outcrops that are extremely steep. Cryorthents are soils that formed in a cold environment and have little to no horizon development. They tend to be on bare exposures overlaying bedrock outcrops.

Environmental Consequences: The existing access has seasonal limitations due to the clayey soils. The route does not have good drainage or any road improvements to reduce impacts to the surrounding soils and gullies. The road generally receives little use which helps minimize impacts, especially during wet soil conditions. The proposed new route has little vegetation due to the soils and slope. The route is planned along a ridgeline, which can reduce the amount of erosion generated compared to a mid-slope route. As the route drops down to the floodplain, however, runoff would travel down the road unless proper drainage and erosion control is maintained. The design features of the Proposed Action should help mitigate impacts to soils from the proposed access route.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for upland soils: During the 2001 field assessment, the soils were found to be meeting the upland soil health standard. With mitigation, the Proposed Action would not affect the area's ability to meet Standard 1.

VEGETATION (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: Two vegetation types would be affected by implementation of the Proposed Action. Most of the uplands are composed of a sagebrush steppe vegetation community. In the saltier areas, a salt shrub vegetation community is found.

The sagebrush steppe is dominated by an overstory of big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata* var. *pauciflora*) with assorted interspersed shrubs such as serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*), snowberry (*Symphoricarpus occidentalis*), rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus* spp) and greasewood *Sarcobatus vermiculatus*). The understory is a mixture of cool season perennial grasses such as western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), bottlebrush squirreltail (*Elymus elymoides*), alkali bluegrass (*Poa juncifolia*), and annual and perennial forbs. The understory is generally sparse within the project area because the mountain shale range site has a limited understory and past livestock grazing practices have hampered the production of a dense understory within the project area.

Most of the lower areas consist of a salt shrub vegetation community. Greasewood, rabbitbrush and the half shrub broom snakeweed (*Gutierrezia sarothrae*) are dominants in the salt shrub

vegetation community. Only a very sparse understory of western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), inland saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata*), and bottlebrush squirreltail (*Elymus elymoides*) grows within the project area.

Environmental Consequences: The Proposed Action would only create minor disturbance to the vegetation. Installation of the poles would remove vegetation from the small areas required for the poles. The only other disturbance would be the 0.3 miles of access road that would be required to install and maintain the transmission line. These disturbances are very minor and would not create any major impacts to vegetation in the project area.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Wildlife, Aquatic and Wildlife, Terrestrial): Allotment # 07754 (Fitch) was assessed for compliance with the Standards for Public Land Health in Colorado during the livestock grazing permit renewal process in 2001. The assessment determined that 320 acres of the 2,070 acre allotment were not in compliance with Standard 3 (Upland Vegetation). A rest rotation grazing system was implemented as the appropriate action to bring the allotment into compliance with Standard 3 (Upland Vegetation).

VISUAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: The proposed project area is located in an area classified as VRM Class II in the 1984 Kremmling Resource Management Plan. The objective of VRM Class II is to retain the existing landscape characteristics. The level of change in any of the basic landscape elements (line, form, color, texture) due to management activities, should be low and not evident.

The project area consists of flat meadows, river inlets and gently rolling hills. The enclosed landscape has a diversity of geologic features. The soil varies in color depending on the direction of view but at the power line site, the soil is a dark brown/grey color. Most views provide foreground, middle ground, and background views. The area has various hills and ridges that break up the landscape in the view. When driving Hwy 40, your view is drawn toward the reservoir and away from the power lines. When looking toward the lines, the wooden poles blend in with the grey/brown landscape.

The character of the landscape is ranching and farming. Several structures including fences, homes, barns and hay meadows are visible. Sagebrush dominates the landscape giving the feeling of an overall smooth texture. The background of the project area is surrounded with mountains, which enhance the Scenic Value of the lands in the project area.

Environmental Consequences: The introduction of 6 new vertical features may be visible from some locations along US Hwy 40 & Colorado Route 134. The poles and new access route would not attract attention from the casual observer, as they would be a mile or more away from the major highway routes. The new route construction has the potential to be visible, and disturbance should be minimized and areas re-vegetated.

RECREATION

Affected Environment: The proposed project area is located within the Wolford Travel Management Plan Area which implemented route designations. Recreation activities include hunting, hiking, and wildlife viewing in the project area where there is currently no designated route. Motorized travel and mountain biking use may also be present on designated routes adjacent to the project area.

Environmental Consequences: Under the Proposed Action, .3 miles of a new access route would be constructed at a width of 30-feet. Additionally, repair of the existing access would be minimal to the extent that would allow safe passage of the required construction equipment. The new access route and the repair to the existing ROW access would be visible and attract attention to visitors who may be recreating in motorized or mechanized forms. This may potentially create issues with visitors using motorized or mechanized means to access the area which is currently open to foot and horseback travel only. However, since the new access road would be designated and signed by the BLM as 'administrative' use only, the new route should not attract the attention of users in the area.

PALEONTOLOGY

Affected Environment: The Area of Potential Effect (APE) is geologically mapped as Pierre Shale and Holocene age gravels, sand, silt and clay. The Pierre Shale is given a ranking of 2 and a Primary Fossil Yield Classification of 5. Holocene age deposits are not considered old enough to produce fossil materials. Corresponding surface soils are mapped as Aaberg Clay Loam, Waybe Clay Loam, Cryothents-Rock Outcrop, Cumulic Cryaquolls and Harsha loam. Bedrock surface deposits consist of platy, weathered and un-weathered siltstone exposed as low rounded mounds. Other bedrock exposures in the gullies outside the APE show a geologic layer or multiple layers of siltstone. Selenite is associated with this bedrock, and observed on slopes and cut-bank arroyos. Fossil shells are observed to be associated with some of the siltstone exposures. The fossils are believed to be limpets from the phylum Mollusca, class Gastropod, sub-class prosobranchia. Five fossil localities containing Mesozoic Age Cretaceous mollusks have been recorded by the United States Geological Survey within Section 2 of the project area (D6583, D6979, D6980, D7044).

Environmental Consequences: The surface of the APE is largely composed of residual Pierre Shale that has weathered in place. Bedrock can be anticipated at 10-30 cm, with the possibility that fossils could be encountered and impacted during the auguring process.

Mitigation:

- The BLM archaeologist/paleontologist would be notified by WAPA a minimum of 10 days in advance of construction so that schedules can be arranged to be on-site during the auguring of poles 3-8, 3-7A, 3-7, 3-6, 3-6A, 3-5, and 3-5A to monitor for fossil resources.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY: All resource values have been evaluated for cumulative impacts. It has been determined that there would be no cumulative impacts as there would only be a few more poles in an area where the transmission line already exists.

PERSONS / AGENCIES CONSULTED: The proposed project was posted on the Kremmling Field Office Internet NEPA Register and public room NEPA board.

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW: See IDT-RRC in Appendix 1.

FONSI

CO-120-2007-07-EA

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the attached environmental assessment, and considering the significance criteria in 40 CFR 1508.27, I have determined that the Proposed Action will not have a significant effect on the human environment. An environmental impact statement is therefore not required.

DECISION RECORD

DECISION: It is my decision to authorize the Proposed Action as described in the attached EA. This decision is contingent on meeting all mitigation measures, design features, and monitoring requirements listed below.

RATIONALE: The reroute of the transmission decision was made to create a solution to the flooding and ice problem around the current location of the transmission lines and to provide uninterrupted power to WAPA's customers.

MITIGATION MEASURES: (see design features of the Proposed Action and Attachment #1)

Cultural

- WAPA will have a qualified and BLM permitted archaeologist on-site during pole augering to help the construction crew avoid surface features, and to observe and document the excavated soil sediments for cultural materials.
- WAPA, or its contractors, will only use rubber-tired vehicles during construction.
- A post-construction monitoring report will be prepared by WAPA and submitted to BLM and State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

Paleontology

- The BLM archaeologist/paleontologist will be notified by WAPA a minimum of 10-days in advance of construction so that schedules can be arranged to be on-site during the auguring of poles 3-8, 3-7A, 3-7, 3-6, 3-6A, 3-5, and 3-5A to monitor for fossil resources.

COMPLIANCE/MONITORING: The right-of-way will be inspected and monitored periodically during terms of the grant to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the grant. The right-of-way will also be inspected after any maintenance activities to determine compliance with and effectiveness of reclamation measures.

- The BLM will inspect disturbed areas for noxious weeds for three growing seasons after the project is completed. If invasive, non-native species do become established, it would be the responsibility of WAPA to control the weeds. Following the 3 year intensive monitoring, the project area would require periodic monitoring to ensure any weeds are controlled and/or eradicated.

NAME OF PREPARER: Susan Cassel

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Joe Stout

DATE: 7/28/08

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: /s/ David Stout

DATE SIGNED: 7/30/08

ATTACHMENTS:

1). Stipulations

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Interdisciplinary Team Analysis Review Record and Checklist

Attachment #1

July 17, 2008 Exhibit "B"

STIPULATIONS
FOR
Western Area Power Administration
COC-62192

MITIGATION

1. The BLM paleontologist will be notified by WAPA a minimum of 10 days in advance of construction so that schedules can be arranged to be on-site during the auguring of poles 3-8, 3-7A, 3-7, 3-6, 3-6A, 3-5 and 3-5A to monitor for fossil resources.

2. To avoid construction impacts to cultural sites 5GA3551 and 5GA3709, WAPA will have a qualified and BLM permitted archaeologist on-site during staging and pole augering to help the construction crew avoid surface features, and to observe and document the excavated soil sediments for cultural materials.

3. WAPA or its contractors will only use rubber–tired vehicles during construction.

4. A post-construction monitoring report will be prepared by WAPA and submitted to BLM and State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

DESIGN FEATURE STIPULATIONS

5. The proposed re-route of the transmission line should include poles and cross arms constructed to specifications which would assure large birds such as eagles cannot be electrocuted (refer to "Suggested Practices for Avian Protection on Powerlines," prepared by the Avian Power Line Interaction Committee, 2006). All poles and cross arms should be fitted with devices that prevent perching and electrocution. In addition, the USFWS recommends line markers for both the ground wires and guy wires to prevent collisions by migratory birds.

6. BLM requires that all construction equipment and vehicles be free of weed seeds prior to entering the project site. The holder shall be responsible for weed control on disturbed areas within the limits of the right-of-way.

7. If the access road is to remain for maintenance work, it will be limited to periods of dry soil conditions or will be constructed as an all-weather road. If maintenance equipment creates ruts in excess of 4 inches deep, the soil shall be deemed too wet to adequately support construction equipment. If emergency access does occur during wet soil conditions, then the applicant must do any necessary repairs to reduce erosion as soon as soil conditions allow. If the new access road will be left open for maintenance or repair work, then the erosion control must be maintained for the duration of the right-of-way.

8. The holder shall seed all disturbed areas including any portion of the old access route that is no longer needed, with the seed mixture listed below. The seed mixture shall be planted in the amounts specified in pounds per live seed (PLS)/acre.Seed shall be tested and the viability testing of seed shall be done in accordance with State laws(s) and within 12 months prior to purchase. Commercial seed shall be either certified or registered seed. The seed mixture container shall be tagged in accordance with State law(s) and available for inspection by the authorized officer.

   Seed shall be planted using a drill equipped with a depth of regulator to ensure proper depth of planting where drilling is possible. The seed mixture shall be evenly and uniformly planted over the disturbed area. (Smaller/heavier seeds have a tendency to drop to the bottom of the drill and are planted first. The holder shall take appropriate measures to ensure this does not occur. Where drilling is not possible, seed shall be broadcast and the area shall be raked or chained to cover the seed. The seeding will be repeated until a satisfactory stand is established as determined by the authorized officer. Evaluation of growth will not be made before completion of the second growing season after seeding. The authorized officer is to be notified a minimum of three days prior to seeding of the project.

SEED MIX FOR RECLAMATION

Western Wheatgrass	Pascopyrum smithii	6.0 lbs PLS**/acre
Bluebunch Wheatgrass	Pseudoroegeneria spicata	6.0 lbs PLS/acre
Slender Wheatgrass	Elymus trachycaulus Ssp: trachycaulus	6.0 lbs PLS/acre
Canby bluegrass	Poa canbyii	2.0 lbs PLS/acre
Indian ricegrass	Achnatherum hymenoides	4.0 lbs PLS/acre
	TOTAL	24.0 lbs PLS/acre

   Seeding rates are for broadcast seeding. If drilled, seeding rates may be halved.

   ** PLS = pure live seed

9. If the proposed new access is built, the amount of surface disturbance appears to be at least 1 acre. If the disturbance is over 1 acre, the applicant is responsible for obtaining a stormwater permit or waiver as required under the Clean Water Act and administered by the State of Colorado, and complying with any other federal or local regulations.

10. The access road will be designated as an administrative road and will not be open to the public.

CURRENT STIPULATIONS

11. The holder shall contact the authorized officer at least 5 days prior to the anticipated start of construction and/or any surface disturbing activities. The authorized officer may require and schedule a preconstruction conference with the holder prior to the holder's commencing construction and/or surface disturbing activities on the right-of-way.

12. The holder shall conduct all activities associated with the construction, operation, and termination of the right-of-way within the authorized limits of the right-of-way.

13. Holder shall maintain the right-of-way in a safe, usable condition, as directed by the authorized officer.

14. The holder shall mulch disturbed areas designated by the authorized officer. The type of mulch shall meet one of the following requirements:

    (a) Straw used for mulching shall be from oats, wheat, rye, or other approved grain crops, and free from noxious weeds or other objectionable material as determined by the authorized officer. Straw mulch shall be suitable for placing with mulch blower equipment.

    (b) Hay shall be certified weed free. Hay shall be suitable for placing with mulch blower equipment.

    (c) Wood cellulose fiber shall be natural or cooked wood cellulose fiber, shall disperse readily in water, and shall be nontoxic. The homogeneous slurry or mixture shall be capable of application with power spray equipment. A colored dye that is non-injurious to plant growth may be used when specified. Wood cellulose fiber shall be packaged in new, labeled containers.

15. Use of pesticides shall comply with the applicable Federal and state laws. Pesticides shall be used only in accordance with their registered uses and within limitations imposed by the Secretary of the Interior. Prior to the use of pesticides, the holder shall obtain from the authorized officer written approval of a plan showing the type and quantity of material to be used, pest(s) to be controlled, method of application, location of storage and disposal of containers, and any other information deemed necessary by the authorized officer. Emergency use of pesticides shall be approved in writing by the authorized officer prior to such use.

16. The holder(s) shall comply with all applicable Federal laws and regulations existing or hereafter enacted or promulgated. In any event, the holder(s) shall comply with the Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976, as amended (15 U.S.C. 2601, et seq.) with regard to any toxic substances that are used, generated by or stored on the right-of-way or on facilities authorized under this right-of-way grant. (See 40 CFR, Part 702-799 and especially, provisions on polychlorinated biphenyls, 40 CFR 761.1-761.193.) Additionally, any release of toxic substances (leaks, spills, etc.) in excess of the reportable quantity established by 40 CFR, Part 117 shall be reported as required by the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act of 1980, Section 102b. A

copy of any report required or requested by any Federal agency or State government as a result of a reportable release or spill of any toxic substances shall be furnished to the authorized officer concurrent with the filing of the reports to the involved Federal agency or State government.

17. When construction activity in connection with the right-of-way breaks or destroys a natural barrier used for livestock control, the gap, thus opened, shall be fenced to prevent the drift of livestock. The subject natural barrier shall be identified by the authorized officer and fenced by the holder as per instruction of the authorized officer.

18. The holder is responsible for informing all persons in the area who are associated with this project that they will be subject to prosecution for disturbing historic or archaeological sites, or for collecting artifacts.

    The holder shall immediately bring to the attention of the Authorized Officer any and all antiquities, or other objects of historic, paleontological, or scientific interest including but not limited to, historic or prehistoric ruins or artifacts DISCOVERED as a result of operations under this authorization (16 U.S.C. 470.-3, 36 CFR 800.112). The holder shall immediately suspend all activities in the area of the object and shall leave such discoveries intact until written approval to proceed is obtained from the Authorized Officer. Approval to proceed will be based upon evaluation of the object(s). Evaluation shall be by a qualified professional selected by the Authorized Officer from a Federal agency insofar as practicable (BLM Manual 8142.06E). When not practicable, the holder shall bear the cost of the services of a non-Federal professional.

    Within five working days the Authorized Officer will inform the holder as to:

    - whether the materials appear eligible for the National Register of Historic Places;
    - the mitigation measures the holder will likely have to undertake before the site can be used (assuming in situ preservation is not necessary); and,
    - a timeframe for the Authorized Officer to complete an expedited review under 36 CFR 800.11 to confirm, through the State Historic Preservation Officer, that the findings of the Authorized Officer are correct and that mitigation is appropriate.

    If the holder wishes, at any time, to relocate activities to avoid the expense of mitigation and/or the delays associated with this process, the Authorized Officer will assume responsibility for whatever recordation and stabilization of the exposed materials may be required.

    Otherwise, the holder will be responsible for mitigation costs. The Authorized Officer will provide technical and procedural guidelines for the conduct of mitigation. Upon verification from the Authorized Officer that the required mitigation has been completed, the holder will then be allowed to resume construction.

Antiquities, historic, prehistoric ruins, paleontological or objects of scientific interest that are outside of the authorization boundaries but directly associated with the impacted resource will also be included in this evaluation and/or mitigation.

Antiquities, historic, prehistoric ruins, paleontological or objects of scientific interest, identified or unidentified, that are outside of the authorization and not associated with the resource within the authorization will also be protected. Impacts that occur to such resources that are related to the authorization's activities, will be mitigated at the holder's cost.

19. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g), the holder of this authorization must notify the authorized officer, by telephone, with written confirmation, immediately upon the discovery of human remains, funerary items, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony. Further, pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4 (c) and (d), you must stop activities in the vicinity of the discovery and protect it for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the authorized officer.

20. If paleontological materials (fossils) are discovered during right-of-way activities, the operator is to immediately stop activities that might further disturb such materials and contact the authorized officer. The operator and the authorized officer will consult and determine the best option for avoiding or mitigating the paleontological site.

21. Prior to termination of the right-of-way, the holder shall contact the authorized officer to arrange a joint inspection of the right-of-way. This inspection will be held to agree to an acceptable termination and rehabilitation plan. This plan shall include, but is not limited to, removal of facilities, drainage structures, or surface material, recontouring, topsoiling, or seeding. The authorized officer must approve the plan in writing prior to the holder's commencement of any termination activities.

Appendix #1

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM ANALYSIS REVIEW RECORD AND CHECKLIST:

Project Title: WAPA Reroute
Project Leader: Susan Cassel

Consultation/Permit Requirements:

Consultation	Date Initiated	Date Completed	Responsible Specialist/ Contractor	Comments
Cultural/Archeological Clearance/SHPO	4/2/08	5/19/08	WAPA/FGR	Section 106 Consultation initiated and completed by WAPA.
Native American	12/13/06	1/13/07	FGR	No known Native American Traditional Cultural Properties. No comments received or concerns identified from Native American Tribes affiliated w/ Middle Park.
T&E Species/FWS	N/A	N/A	MM	
Permits Needed (i.e. Air or Water)			PB	It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain a stormwater permit or waiver if 1 or more acres of disturbance would occur. It appears that a state permit is needed.

(NP) = Not Present
(NI) = Resource/Use Present but Not Impacted
(PI) = Potentially Impacted and Brought Forward for Analysis.

NP NI PI	Discipline/Name	Date Review Comp.	Initials	Review Comments (required for Critical Element NIs, and for elements that require a finding but are not carried forward for analysis.)
	CRITICAL ELEMENTS			
NI	Air Quality **Belcher**	3/21/07	PB	Air Quality is considered in attainment of National Air Quality standards and will not be impacted by the Proposed Action.
NP	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern **Stout**	7/28/08	JS	There are no Areas of Critical Environmental Concern in the proximity of the proposed project area.
PI	Cultural Resources **Rupp**	7/16/08	FGR	See analysis in EA.
NP	Environmental Justice **Stout**	7/28/08	JS	According to the most recent Census Bureau statistics (2000), there are no minority or low income communities within the Kremmling Planning Area.
NP	Farmlands, Prime and Unique **Belcher**	3/21/07	PB	There are no farmlands, prime or unique, in the proximity of the proposed project area.
NI	Floodplains **Belcher**	3/21/07	PB	The Proposed Action would not affect the functionality of the floodplain or increase the flood hazard.
PI	Invasive, **Johnson**	1/22/07	RJ	See analysis in EA.

	Non-native Species			
PI	Migratory Birds **McGuire**	7/26/07	MM	See analysis in EA.
NP	Native American Religious Concerns **Rupp**	1/14/07	FGR	There are no known Native American Traditional Cultural Properties. Thus, there would be no impacts.
PI	T/E, and Sensitive Species (Finding on Standard 4) **McGuire**	7/26/07	MM	See analysis in EA.
NP	Wastes, Hazardous and Solid **Johnson**	1/22/07	RJ	There are no known hazardous or solid wastes located on BLM-administered lands in the proposed project area, and there would be no wastes generated as a result of the Proposed Action or No Action alternative.
PI	Water Quality, Surface and Ground (Finding on Standard 5) **Belcher**	3/29/07	PB	See analysis in EA.
NP	Wetlands & Riparian Zones (Finding on Standard 2) **Belcher**	3/29/07	PB	Finding: The applicant would avoid the riparian zone on public land.
NI	Wild and Scenic Rivers **Sterin**	3/5/07	BS	The Proposed Action would not impact any eligible rivers in the Kremmling Field Office.
NP	Wilderness **Monkouski**	3/1/07	JM	There is no designated Wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas in the proximity of the proposed project area.
NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS (A finding must be made for these elements)				
PI	Soils (Finding on Standard 1) **Belcher**	3/29/07	PB	See analysis in EA.
PI	Vegetation (Finding on Standard 3) **Johnson**	1/22/07	RJ	See analysis in EA.
NI	Wildlife, Aquatic (Finding on Standard 3) **McGuire**	4/3/07	MM	No impacts to aquatic wildlife would be expected to occur. Finding: The Proposed Action would not affect Standard 3 for aquatic wildlife.
NI	Wildlife, Terrestrial (Finding on Standard 3) **McGuire**	4/3/07	MM	No impacts to terrestrial wildlife would be expected to occur. Finding: The Proposed Action would not affect Standard 3 for terrestrial wildlife.
OTHER NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS				
PI	Access/Transportation **Monkouski**	3/1/07	JM	See Recreation section.
NP	Forest Management **Rosene**	3/16/07	RR	No impacts.
NI	Geology and Minerals **Hodgson**	3/14/07	KH	No impacts.
NI	Hydrology/Water Rights **Belcher**	3/29/07	PB	No impacts to water rights. See Soils and Water Quality sections for Hydrology concerns.
PI	Paleontology **Rupp**	7/24/08	FGR	See analysis in EA.
NI	Noise **Monkouski**	3/1/07	JM	Minor short term impacts.
NI	Range Management **Johnson**	1/22/07	RJ	No impacts to livestock grazing. The project area is grazed by livestock on a rest rotation grazing system.
NI	Lands/ Realty Authorizations **Cassel**	7/14/08	SC	There are no leases or permits in the location of the proposed action. The only ROW's are the WAPA transmission line which is to be amended in the proposed action and the Wolford Reservoir that is causing the impacts to the existing transmission line.
PI	Recreation **Monkouski**	3/1/07	JM	See analysis in EA.
NI	Socio-Economics **Stout**	7/28/08	JS	There would be no impacts.
PI	Visual Resources **Straub**	2/28/07	RS	See analysis in EA.
NI	Cumulative Impact Summary **Stout**	7/28/08	JS	There would be no cumulative impacts.
FINAL REVIEW				

	P&E Coordinator	**Stout**	7/28/08	JS	
	Field Manager	D. **Stout**			